United Nations A/53/L.78

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
23 July 1999

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 30
United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/12 A of 12 November 1997, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform",

Reaffirming its determination to strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations, including in the field of environment and human settlements, and thus improve its performance in order to realize the full potential of the Organization,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements[1] and the report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements annexed thereto, which contain recommendations on reforming and strengthening the activities of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements,

Expressing its appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Task Force for their commendable work,

Conscious of the continued deterioration of the global environment and the state of human settlements despite some positive achievements, as well as of the need to strengthen the institutions of the United Nations charged with responsibility for environment and human settlements, to improve their performance and to promote coordination in the implementation of the environmental and human settlements dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system,

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

[1] A/53/463.

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in their Nairobi location and of ensuring the provision of requisite support and stable, adequate and predictable financial resources necessary to both organizations for the fulfilment of their mandates, as contained in General Assembly resolutions 2997/XXVII of 15 December 1972 and 32/162 of 19 December 1977, as well as in the Nairobi Declaration on the role and mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme in its decision 19/1 of 7 February 1997, and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements,[2] adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) on 14 June 1996, including by seeking additional financial resources through broadening the range of sources of funding for both organizations, in accordance with the Financial Rules and Regulations of the United Nations,

Taking into account the views of Member States on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements,

Also taking into account the views contained in decision 20/17 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and resolution 17/6 of the Commission on Human Settlements concerning the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken to strengthen the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements, and in that context takes note of the general thrust of recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements,[1] proposing actions to be taken by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, and also notes the recommendations outlined in section IV of the report;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Office at Nairobi, in its capacity as the only United Nations headquarters located in a developing country, through the provision of requisite support and stable, adequate and predictable financial resources, including by proposing additional regular budget resources, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, for the consideration of the Assembly, with due regard for proper United Nations budgetary procedures;

3. *Encourages* the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi to take steps to increase the level of utilization of the Office, and in this regard encourages other agencies, funds and programmes to consider increasing their utilization of its facilities for their activities;

4. *Calls upon* the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to increase cooperation in and strengthen coordination of their activities, within the framework of their respective mandates and separate programmatic and organizational identities, as well as their separate Executive Directors;

5. *Supports* the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of an environmental management group for the purpose of enhancing inter-agency coordination in the field of environment and human settlements, and requests the Secretary-General to develop, in consultation with the Member States and members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the mandate, terms of reference, appropriate criteria for membership and flexible, cost-effective working methods of the proposed environmental

[2] A/CONF.165/14, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

management group, and to submit them to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session for consideration;

6. *Welcomes* the proposal to institute an annual ministerial-level global environmental forum, with the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme constituting the forum in the years that it meets in regular session and, in alternate years, with the forum taking the form of a special session of the Governing Council, in which participants can gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment, with due consideration for the need to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the governance mechanisms of the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as possible financial implications and the need to maintain the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the main forum for high-level policy debate on sustainable development;

7. *Supports* the proposals for the facilitation of and support for enhancing linkages and coordination within and among environmental and environment-related conventions, including by the United Nations Environment Programme, with full respect for the status of the respective convention secretariats and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties of the conventions concerned, and emphasizes in this regard the need to provide the United Nations Environment Programme with adequate resources to perform this task;

8. *Welcomes* the proposals for the involvement, participation and constructive engagement of major groups active in the field of environment and human settlements, with due consideration for the relevant rules, regulations and procedures of the United Nations;

9. *Reiterates* the importance of strengthening the capacity and capability of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, within the framework of their existing mandates, in the areas of information, the monitoring and assessment of global and regional environmental and human settlements trends and early warning information on threats, so as to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action, and in this context emphasizes the importance of strengthening the system-wide Earthwatch as an effective, accessible and strictly non-political science-based system;

10. *Reaffirms* that, in accordance with its mandate, the United Nations Environment Programme should not become involved in conflict identification, prevention or resolution;

11. *Stresses* the need to ensure that capacity-building and technical assistance, in particular with respect to institutional strengthening in developing countries, as well as research and scientific studies in the field of environment and human settlements, must remain important components of the work programmes of both the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), within their existing mandates, and also stresses in this regard the need for adequate financial resources as well as the need to avoid duplication of efforts;

12. *Also stresses* the need to further enhance the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility, consistent with its role as defined in the instrument for the establishment of the restructured Global Environment Facility;

13. *Reaffirms* the role of the Commission on Human Settlements in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda,[3] emphasizes the need for it to take steps to prepare

[3] A/CONF.165/14, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

for the review of its implementation in 2001, and welcomes the proposals that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) should strengthen its core activities and develop into a centre for excellence in human settlements;

14. *Welcomes* the proposal to continue ongoing work in the development of indicators in the field of environment and human settlements, and in this regard stresses the importance of the need to avoid duplication of efforts;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.